

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017



ABILITY  
WEST

enabling people with disabilities



## OUR VISION STATEMENT

*Ability West is dedicated to enabling people with intellectual disability realise their dreams and ambitions.*



## OUR CORE VALUES

- ★ Rights Based Approach ★
- ★ Person Centredness ★
  - ★ Independence ★
  - ★ Participation in Community Life ★
  - ★ Partnership ★
- ★ Openness, Integrity, Accountability and Transparency ★

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**Ability West** will deliver on its Vision Statement by doing the following:

Placing service users' fundamental rights at the centre of our activities and promoting those rights.

Empowering service users to live the lifestyle of their choice and to play a meaningful role in all aspects of community life.

Listening and then developing a variety of options that can be used flexibly to meet the identified needs of service users.

Developing the skills and dedication of our staff in a supportive and motivating environment.

Working in active partnership with service users, families, staff, our voluntary supporters and the broader community.

Campaigning at local, regional and national level to resource and realise our vision to achieve these aims.



Staff and Service Users revealing the mural at Criost Linn's Moon Magic Open Day. I-r: Mary Joyce, Laura Cull, John Conneely, Breda Joyce, Chloe Conneely, Ella Coohill, Julia Coohill, Kitty Nee, Mary Vaughan.

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# CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Ability West provided services and supports to over 540 children and adults with intellectual disability and autism in 2017. Unfortunately, it was another financially challenging year for the organisation, however, I am pleased to advise that services and supports continued with frontline services being protected. The operating budget for 2017 was increased on the previous year's budget taking into account full year costs for six individuals who transferred to our services from other service providers in 2016, and the full year adjustment for 2016 school leavers.

Ability West has prepared its financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice and the Companies Act 2014. Please refer to the following sections of the annual report: Directors' Report, Structure, Governance and Management. Audited accounts for 2017 are available on our website, [www.abilitywest.ie](http://www.abilitywest.ie).

During 2017 the Charities Regulator published "Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public" which aims to assist the Board of Directors to run this organisation effectively, avoiding difficulties in respect of fundraising activities and complying with our legal duties, while also boosting public trust and confidence. In this regard, Ability West has introduced a number of new policies and procedures for fundraising and donations which can be accessed on our website, [www.abilitywest.ie](http://www.abilitywest.ie).

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Kevin Newell who commenced on the Board of Directors in June 2017.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the Moycullen Branch of Ability West which formally commenced operation in June 2017. The branch members have already held a number of fundraising and community events in their 12 months of operation.



I would like to acknowledge the support and commitment of my fellow board members and on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to sincerely thank the Chief Executive, Breda Crehan-Roche, Recording Secretary to the Board, Carol A. Browne, the Senior Management Team and all staff for their ongoing hard work, dedication and commitment to providing high quality services and supports to people with intellectual disability and autism.

As always, our work is reinforced by our many supporters and friends including: donors, volunteers and our statutory funders: Health Service Executive, Departments of Education and Skills, Social Protection, and Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board. We are very grateful for this support and on behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank everyone most sincerely. Your ongoing support and commitment is very much appreciated by us.

Is mian liom buíochas a gabháil agus aitheantas a thabhairt do gach aon duine a thug tacaíocht do Éirim an Iarthair i rith na bliana. Tá mór mheas againn faoi do thacaíocht leanúnach agus do thiomantas.



Redmond (Ray) Kelly

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REVIEW OF 2017



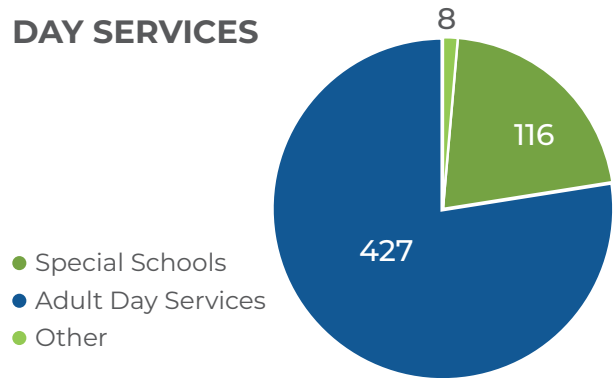
*Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Executive*

Thankfully, there were no funding cuts to our HSE allocation for 2017, the initial core funding allocation for the year was €23,836,427 which took into account the full year effect of funding providing in 2016 and also some once-off development funding for the new community hubs. Notwithstanding this, 2017 was a particularly challenging year which was compounded by a number of issues, such as safeguarding, endeavouring to respond to the changing needs of an ageing co-hort of service users, emergencies arising, the ever increasing demands for respite and supports, and the increasing trend of children with complexities and medical fragility, all of which we endeavoured to respond to within existing resources. Unfortunately, we also experienced increased non-pay costs this year which can be attributed with rising costs of insurance and the ongoing maintenance of our facilities to ensure they are of a high standard. During the year we continued to work very hard alongside service users and their families to meet all of these challenges and I am pleased that we managed to protect frontline services and respond to some additional needs.

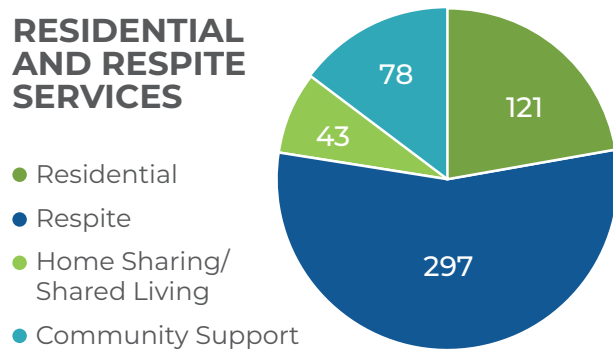
Regrettably, we did not achieve a breakeven financial outturn for 2017 due to the ever increasing demands for services, safeguarding issues and increased costs associated with the provision of services. The financial statements for 2017 have been completed using the Financial Reporting Standard FRS102 and drafted cognisant of the Charities SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice). The audited accounts are available on our website at [www.abilitywest.ie](http://www.abilitywest.ie).

In 2017 Ability West provided the following direct services:

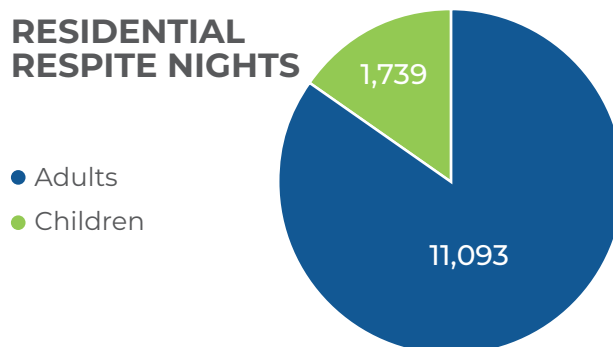
## DAY SERVICES



## RESIDENTIAL AND RESPITE SERVICES



## RESIDENTIAL RESPITE NIGHTS



## RENOVATIONS AND REFURBISHMENTS

There were many major and minor renovations carried out in 2017 under our capital programme, including: roof repairs to The Glebe Resource Centre; internal painting and replacement of external timber cladding at St. Joseph's Training Centre, refurbishment of Whitestrand Lodge apartment to accommodate additional respite for children; renovations to the New Directions Hubs in Galway City and Moycullen; water pipe replacement and re-routing in Abbeytrinity Group Home and St. Teresa's Respite, the addition of double French doors in a number of group homes for fire safety and evacuation.

During 2017 we also completed a training facility in one of our older buildings, which was originally a sheltered workshop, part of which had not been utilised for many years. This work commenced in 2016 and was completed on a phased basis by external contractors and our own maintenance team as and when funds became available. The addition of this state-of-the-art training facility for staff and service users is particularly beneficial as it has significantly reduced the costs associated with utilising external training facilities. I would like to acknowledge Peter Burke, Manager of Ancillary Services, Ronan Waldron, Maintenance, and Community Employment Scheme Participants, for all their work on this facility.

## TRANSPORT

During 2017 we were able to replace three of our buses for Whitestrand Lodge Respite Centre, Macotar Lodge and Palace Fields Group Homes.

Renovations, refurbishments and replacement vehicles are only possible through funds raised and donations made to our capital programme which is specifically used towards the purchase of new buildings, renovations to existing buildings, the purchase and/or replacement



*HIQA Registration Certificate for Sonas Group Home – 8 March 2017. Angela McCormack, Unit Director/Person in Charge with John McHugo, A/Chief Executive*

of specially adapted buses and specialised equipment for service users.

As part of new public procurement guidelines launched in 2017 (Office of Government Procurement), Ability West was obliged to advertise procurement opportunities and in this regard, Ability West held an e-tender process for our external transport routes. Contracts were awarded in September 2017 and I am pleased to advise that there was minimum disruption for the service users during this change. It is envisaged that savings from the process will be realised in 2018. I would like to acknowledge the huge work undertaken by Peter Burke, Manager of Ancillary Services, and John McHugo, Director of Finance.

## NEW COMMUNITY HUBS

A new community hub was set up in Galway City for school leavers and adults leaving rehabilitative training. This hub was set up in line with New Directions policy which embraces the premise of contribution and participation in the community. I would like to acknowledge the many staff who were instrumental in setting up this service.



Liam Hynes, recipient of the Roy Murphy Special Achievement Award and Jack Crean, NUIG, Student Volunteer of the Year Award, at the Best Buddies Ball 2017

## RE-BRANDING

We were very fortunate to be engaged by a local, Barna based, web development company, Bad Dog, in late 2016 who proposed developing a new website for us on a pro bono basis. During the many meetings between Ability West and Paul Cotter and his team at Bad Dog, Paul proposed creating a new logo for the organisation along with the development of the new website. Ability West had re-branded in 2007, given that this was 10 years ago it was timely to look at this possibility. Board Member, Kevin O Flatharta, had already completed a piece of work on logo development and re-branding, and the colours in our new logo can be attributed to him. With this work and the graphic design expertise of Paul and the team in Bad Dog we now have our new logo which is modern, colourful and eye-catching. The Service User Council were consulted about the changes to the logo and their feedback was extremely positive.

Paul and his team gave up a huge amount of time and provided expertise to bring this project to fruition, and the new logo and website were launched in November 2017.

We were delighted to be joined on the occasion by Mahmood Sobhani from Bad Dog, Micháel Donoghue, Galway Senior Hurling Team Manager, and Galway senior players Jason Flynn and John Hanbury. I would like to acknowledge and thank all of them for their generosity and volunteerism in this regard.

The feedback on the new logo has been extremely positive from service users, staff and the general public. Service users are very happy with it and they feel it is a logo that better represents Ability West and the work that we do.

## EXTERNAL THIRD PARTY ACCREDITATION

### Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)

HIQA became responsible for the regulation of residential and respite services for children and adults with disabilities in November 2013. Since then, HIQA has inspected all of Ability West's residential and respite services and I am delighted to advise that all of our services achieved registration by early 2017. The renewal of registration takes place every three years and renewal inspections commenced in the latter part of 2017. To date three residential services and one respite service have had their registrations renewed and others are within the process. A newly opened service, Teach Michel, was successfully registered with HIQA in February 2018. Teach Michel is a property of Carraig Dubh Housing Association and Ability West is the service provider.

In 2017 we had 22 unannounced inspections from HIQA and the learning and outcomes from these inspections has been transferred to all our residential and respite services. The residential standards are important and we continue to improve our services by auditing our services, seeking feedback from service users, their families and staff. Sincere thanks to all our Persons in Charge, their staff teams, staff in Quality and Compliance, Client Services, Human Resources, Finance and the Chief Executive's Office.



## **Excellence through People 1000:2012**

We had a surveillance audit in April 2017 during which the Assessor audited our services against this standard. The accreditation encompasses human resource processes and Ability West was successful in retaining this accreditation following the assessment. The Assessor complimented the organisation and advised that she had been impressed by all the staff she had met throughout the two day audit. I wish to acknowledge Ben Cowdell, Human Resources, for his input during this audit.

## **I.S. EN 9001:2015**

Ability West Services is accredited to the ISO standard I.S. EN 9001:2015 which has increased focus on leadership, management, being customer focussed and continuous improvement. The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) completed a surveillance audit in July 2017. The audit went very well and Ability West retained this standard. Well done to Eileen Costello-Conneely, Quality and Compliance Manager, and to all involved.

## **QQI Accreditation for Training Service Users**

Ability West's training services are accredited to QQI/FETAC for a number of training programmes for service users and we are currently in the process of updating this accreditation.

## **VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME Best Buddies Ball**

The Best Buddies Annual Ball took place in May 2017 with over 150 people in attendance. It was a wonderful night with brilliant entertainment from Matthew Gardiner, World Dance Champion, and dancers from the Hession School of Dance. The recipient of the Roy Murphy Special Achievement Award was Liam Hynes, Buddy, and Jack Crean, NUIG who won Student Volunteer of the Year.

## **Outstanding Young Person of the Year**

The JCI Ten Outstanding Young People's Awards took place in the Connacht Hotel in April 2017. Eddie Connolly, nominated by Ability West for his work as President of Best Buddies GMIT and volunteering in general, was the winner in the 'Humanitarian and Voluntary Leadership' category. Luke Morgan graduated from GMIT in 2016 but remains involved in the Best Buddies Programme. He was a winner in the 'Cultural Achievement' category. Katie Coughlan, is a student at GTI and has completed her social care placement in St. Joseph's Training Centre, won 'Contribution to Children, World Peace, and/or Human Rights' for her work in basketball training for children with Dyspraxia. Congratulations to Eddie, Luke and Katie who are inspirational young people and we are very proud of their achievements.

## **SERVICE USER COUNCIL**

The Service User Council continued to meet throughout 2017. John Farragher, Chairperson of the council chaired a very successful Service User Consultation Meeting in November 2017 with 120 people attending the event. The Chief Executive and Senior Management Team attended part of the meeting to respond to questions including: funding, work and leisure, access to volunteers, etc. They also briefed the service users about developments within the organisation. There were also ongoing meetings throughout the year between the council, management, relevant staff members and external parties in relation to various issues such as transport, human rights, the new logo and corporate colours, advocacy among others.

## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Human Rights Committee continued to meet in 2017. The independent Chairperson, John O’Dea, met with the Board of Directors in June to appraise them of the committee’s progress which has been very positive. Mr. O’Dea and I also meet on a regular basis to discuss the operations of the committee.

## RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES COMMITTEE

This committee was set up in 2017 to ensure that we promote an ethos of positive interventions and work towards a restraint free environment. In a small number of cases restrictive practices may be necessary, the guiding principle being that the least restrictive practice is used, only as a last resort and ensuring that the practice used is legitimate, safe and minimal. The Restrictive Practices Committee is chaired by Renjith Joseph, Physiotherapy/OT Manager who meets with the Director of Client Services to report on progress of the committee. Examples of restrictive practices would be alarms, sensors and monitors.

## OUTLOOK FOR 2018

The trend of challenging times has continued into this year with budgets being tight and we need to provide services and supports as effectively and efficiently as possible. Safeguarding continues to challenge us and we continue to have a no tolerance approach to any form of abuse. The changing needs of service users and service demands for respite and residential services continues to increase.

We are acutely aware of the changing needs of our ageing population and while we have active ageing programmes in place throughout the city and county, an area we are looking at is a model that caters for an ageing profile who do not have such an active lifestyle but would benefit from having a more appropriate service for their needs rather

than attending an adult day service or active ageing programme. We also are endeavouring to further work in the development of a model for people with early onset dementia/Alzheimer’s.

Future planning for children with intellectual disability/autism would indicate that there is an increasing number of children with complexities and medical fragility, and this is reflective of national trends. There is a growing body of evidence that would indicate a requirement for intense staff development in positive behaviour management, communication and positive interventions to facilitate children to remain at home with their families, and in their communities, and to develop their future as a valued adult in society.

Thankfully, there was funding for respite and for alternative respite provided by the HSE in the first quarter of the year which will make a big difference for many service users and families. We continue to roll out a comprehensive capital programme and we appreciate the generosity of so many of our supporters.

Ability West plans to develop a new purpose built day service in Headford and a site has been secured. It is envisaged that service users from the Headford and surrounding areas will be able to access their day service in their local community rather than commuting to the Galway City or Tuam.

We are also planning to re-locate the respite service from Mountbellew to Glenamaddy as the existing house in Glenamaddy would provide for a more homely environment for respite breaks. In order to accommodate the respite service, the day service currently in Glenamaddy will re-locate to St. Francis, Kilkerrin, once a purpose built extension has been commissioned.

Later in 2108 we will commence drafting a new five year strategic plan 2019-2023 and we will commence consultation with relevant stakeholders in this regard.

The Family Forum is a very important communication and consultation forum and we are committed to holding two such fora meetings during 2018. We will work in partnership with the Service User Council during the year in relation to new regulation and implementation of legislation, e.g. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 which will challenge us. However, we will meet these with courage and determination to ensure that people with intellectual disability and autism have good, valued lives in their communities.

## BEREAVEMENTS

Sadly, during 2017, we had four service user bereavements, Kathleen Glynn, Fiona McNamara, Bernie and Michael Gibbons. Many of our service users, families, staff, branch, board members and volunteers also experienced bereavements and we extend our deepest sympathies to them. We especially remember Chris Conneally, former Principal of St. Joseph's Special School and former board member of Ability West, who passed away in April 2017. Chris was a great advocate for children and adults with intellectual disability and was made an honorary member of Ability West in 2011. May they all rest in peace.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Chairman, Ray Kelly and board members for their guidance and support and for giving so generously of their time, expertise and skills to Ability West. In conclusion, I would like to thank service users, their parents, families and carers for their ongoing co-operation. Thanks also to members of the Senior Management Team, Assistant Directors of Client Services, Human Resources and Finance, Department Heads, Managers, Unit Directors, staff, branch members, Community Employment Scheme and TÚS participants, and all volunteers for their ongoing dedication and

commitment to people with intellectual disability and autism. Special thanks to Carol A. Browne, Executive Assistant, for project managing this annual report and for her ongoing support and invaluable assistance.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the HSE, in particular Tony Canavan, Chief Officer, Community Health Organisation (CHO) 2, Elaine Prendergast, Head of Service - Social Care, CHO2, John Fitzmaurice, General Manager - Disability Services, CHO2, Mary O'Donnell, Disability Services Manager Galway CHO2, Liam Fogarty, Head of Finance, and Gerry Burke, Integrated Services, CHO2, for their ongoing support and assistance. I would also like to thank the many statutory, non-statutory and voluntary service providers that Ability West works with for their ongoing co-operation and assistance.

In partnership with service users and their families we will work together to ensure that we provide person centred quality services and supports to ensure that the people we are privileged to work with, be of service to and support are empowered and enabled to live the lives of their choice in their local communities.

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil leis an gCathaoirleach, leis an mBord Stiúrthóirí agus le baill uile na bhfochoistí as a dtacaíocht agus a dtreoir le linn 2017. Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil freisin leo siúd a d'fhreastal agus a bhain úsáid as ár seirbhísí, leis na tuismitheoirí agus a gclanna. Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le baill uile na gCraobh as ucht a gcuid tacaíochta, leis an bhFoireann Bainistíochta, le Stiúrthóirí na nIonad, leis an bhFoireann agus leis na hOibrithe Deonacha, as ucht seirbhís den scoth a chuir ar fáil.



**Breda Crehan-Roche**  
Chief Executive

# DIRECTORS' REPORT

## STRUCTURE

Ability West is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ability West is governed by the members of the Board who are elected on an annual basis at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Each region will nominate two Directors to the Board, one of whom must be a family member of a service user of the company. A 'family member' means the parent, grandparent, legal guardian, sibling, spouse of a sibling, child of a sibling, aunt, uncle spouse of an aunt or uncle or child of an aunt or uncle of a service user. Members are also co-opted having regard to the skill mix of the Board.

The Board of Directors met 11 times during the year.



*Board of Directors and Chief Executive  
From back l-r: Kevin Flavin, Mary O'Mahony, Jack King  
Páraic Lawless, Bridie Newell, Mick Finnerty, Breda Dolan, Paddy Daly, Marie O'Dowd, Anthony O'Connor, Kevin O Flatharta, Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Executive, Ray Kelly, Chairman. Missing: Kevin Newell*

## ATTENDANCE AT BOARD MEETINGS - 2017

	J	F	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
Patrick J. Daly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	-	✓	✗	✓	✗	7
Breda Dolan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Mick Finnerty	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✗	✓	9
Kevin Flavin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	11
Ray Kelly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	11
Jack King	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✗	✓	✓	✓	10
Páraic Lawless	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✗	✓	✓	✓	9
Bridie Newell	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	11
Kevin Newell	<i>Commenced June 2017</i>				✓	✓	-	✗	✓	✓	✓	5
Anthony O'Connor	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	-	✗	✓	✓	✓	8
Marie O'Dowd	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Kevin O Flatharta	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	-	✓	✓	✗	✓	7
Mary O'Mahony	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	11

Within the Board's broad governance role are a number of specific roles that are exercised, including: approval of the strategic plan, reporting to members at the Annual General Meeting and passing bye-laws which are subject to approval by the members. The reserved functions of the Board are: appointment of the Chief Executive, approval of the annual budget, acquisition and disposal of company assets and overall corporate governance.

The Chief Executive accounts for her stewardship of the organisation at Board meetings.

The Board of Directors are supported by a Board Committee structure which deals effectively with specific aspects of the business of the company. The Board Committees in place are:

- Finance Committee
- Audit Committee
- Visiting Committee
- Quality and Safety Board Committee

The Board Members do not receive remuneration in respect of services provided to Ability West, however, they are entitled to claim reimbursement of expenses, e.g. travel.

## BOARD MEMBERS 2017

- **Mr. Redmond (Ray) Kelly**, Chairperson and Elected Director
- **Mr. Jack King**, Vice Chairperson and Co-opted Director
- **Mr. Kevin Flavin**, Hon. Treasurer and Co-opted Director
- **Mr. Patrick J. Daly**, Company Secretary and Co-opted Director
- **Ms. Breda Dolan**, Co-opted Director
- **Mr. Michael Finnerty**, Regional Director
- **Mr. Kevin Flaherty (O Flatharta)**, Co-opted Director
- **Mr. Patrick (Páraig) Lawless**, Regional Director
- **Mrs. Bridie Newell**, Regional Director
- **Mr. Kevin Newell**, Regional Director (appointed June 2017)



*Senior Management Team (l-r): Audrey Pidgeon, Director of Client Services, John McHugo, Director of Finance, Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Executive, Enda Maloney, Director of Human Resources, Carol A. Browne, Recording Secretary.*

- **Mr. Michael (Anthony) O'Connor**, Co-opted Director
- **Mrs. Marie O'Dowd**, Regional Director
- **Mrs. Mary O'Mahony**, Co-opted Director

### IN ATTENDANCE

- **Mrs. Breda Crehan-Roche**, Chief Executive
- **Ms. Carol A. Browne**, Recording Secretary

## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

### Senior Management Team

- Chief Executive, Mrs. Breda Crehan-Roche
- Director of Human Resources, Mr. Enda Maloney
- Director of Finance, Mr. John McHugo
- Director of Client Services, Ms. Audrey Pidgeon (appointed April 2018)
- Recording Secretary, Ms. Carol A. Browne

### Finance Committee

The role of the Finance Committee is to keep the financial management of Ability West under review. The committee consists of board members, one of whom is the Honorary Treasurer and two members of the Senior Management Team, i.e. the Chief Executive and Director of Finance.



AGM 2017  
 Patrick J. Daly, Company Secretary, Kevin Newell, Director,  
 Ray Kelly, Chairman, Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Executive, Patrick Lawless, Director

The Finance Committee meets regularly during the course of the year. The current members of the Finance Committee are:

- Mr. Kevin Flavin, Chairman
- Mrs. Breda Crehan-Roche
- Mr. Jack King
- Mr. Patrick Lawless
- Mr. John McHugo
- Mrs. Marie O’Dowd

### Audit Committee

The role of the Audit Committee is to keep under review the adequacy, scope and effectiveness of accounting and internal control systems of all activities carried out by Ability West. The Audit Committee is chaired by a board member and membership includes other board members and an external, independent member who has audit and financial experience. The members of the Audit Committee are:

- Mr. Patrick J. Daly, Chairman
- Mr. Kevin Flavin
- Mr. Jack King
- Mr. Gerry Walsh

### Nominations Committee

The Board of Directors set up this committee to respond to changing compliance as a result of the introduction of the Annual Compliance Statement for Section 39 organisations by the Health Service Executive. The committee is tasked with the core responsibilities of managing the appointment process for new board members and succession planning for the Board of Directors. It must ensure that:

*“The membership of the Board of Directors should reflect diversity in terms of gender, skills and areas of competency. The size of the Board of Directors should be large enough to take account of the full range of members’ duties and responsibilities but small enough to enable the Board of Directors to perform effectively.”*

Membership of the committee:

- Mr. Ray Kelly, Chairman
- Mr. Patrick J. Daly
- Mr. Kevin Newell

In attendance

- Mrs. Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Executive

These meetings are held bi-annually, the first of which was held on 22nd January 2018.

## Visiting Committee

The purpose of the Visiting Committee is for board members to visit various services provided by Ability West. All board members carry out this function in pairs to see the services, meet the service manager, staff and service users. They complete a written report following their visit and copies are provided to all board members. The report of visits is an agenda item at the next Board meeting. The Chief Executive provides feedback on any issues the board members report on and answers any queries.

## Quality and Safety Board Committee

The purpose of this committee is to assure the Board of Directors that there are appropriate and effective systems in place that cover all aspects of clinical, quality and safety. The committee oversees the development by the executive/senior management team of the quality and safety programme for the service; ensures policies and processes clearly articulate responsibility, authority and accountability for quality, safety and risk management across the service; secures assurance from the executive/senior management team on the implementation of the quality and safety programme and the application of appropriate governance structure and processes, e.g. risk escalation, including monitored outcomes through quality indicators and outcome measures; and secures assurance from the executive/senior management team that Ability West is conforming with all regulatory and legal requirements to assure quality, safety and risk management. The membership of the Quality and Safety Board Committee is as follows:

- All Board Members
- Chief Executive
- Director of Client Services
- Director of Finance
- Director of Human Resources
- Quality and Compliance Manager
- Recording Secretary (in attendance)

## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### Constitution

Ability West is a not-for-profit organisation providing services and supports to over 540 children and adults with disability across Galway City and County. The company is governed by a Constitution which was mostly recently amended and ratified in March 2017 following an EGM. At that time, the changes to the Constitution brought the governance of the organisation in line with the Companies Act 2014.

The principle objective of Ability West is to benefit the community through the promotion and/or provision of the highest possible standard of service, support, treatment, training, education, general welfare of persons with disability in their own communities and the giving of advice, guidance and support to parents/guardians and family members of persons with disability. The company provides services and supports through rehabilitative training, adult day services, residential and respite care, short breaks, home sharing and contract families, community supports, volunteers, work placements, and multi-disciplinary supports including speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, positive behaviour support, occupational therapy, social work and psychology. These supports are in place to enable children and adults with intellectual disability and autism to realise their dreams and ambitions, and take their rightful place in society.

There have been no changes in the principle objectives since the last Directors' Report.

### Method of Appointment or Election of Directors

The Directors of the Board are appointed and elected at the Annual General Meeting in accordance with the company's Articles of Association. Members are also co-opted having regard to the optimum skill mix of the Board.

## Induction and Training of Directors

An induction programme is in place for new Directors on commencement of their term in office, which includes a Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference document for members. Any changes to regulation and legal requirements are notified to members at Board meetings and relevant training is also provided. Training for Directors was most recently held in September 2017 and was provided by The Wheel and covered Corporate Governance, Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members.

## Organisational Structure and Decision Making

Ability West is governed by the members of the Board who are elected in accordance with the company's Constitution. The Directors are non-executive members of the company, who receive no remuneration for their services and represent diverse skills, expertise and backgrounds. The Board meets on a monthly basis with the exception of August when there is no meeting. Collectively, the Board has non-executive responsibility, including corporate governance for the company and the services it provides.

The Board delegates the day to day management of Ability West to the Chief Executive, who is in turn supported by a tiered management system that identifies clear lines of responsibility and accountability at each level.

The Board recognises the value of high standards of corporate governance and to this end is supported by various Board Committees, as noted earlier. These committees are responsible for overseeing particular aspects of the work of the company and reporting to the Board.

## Risk Management

The Directors have assessed the major risks to which the company is exposed, in particular those related to its operations

and finances, and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate exposure to major risks.

The management of risk in the company is viewed by the Board as a corporate governance priority and a robust Risk Management Policy is in place which is regularly reviewed. The Board also has a Quality and Safety Board Committee as detailed earlier in this report.

The company's internal control systems are supported by policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines covering all aspects of the work of the organisation.

## Annual Compliance Statement

During 2017 the Board of Directors completed the HSE Annual Compliance Statement for Section 39 funded agencies in respect of 2016. This statement was signed by the Chairman and another board member and submitted to the HSE. The 2017 Annual Compliance Statement is due to be submitted to the HSE by end May 2018.

The annual budget is approved by the Board of Directors. Management accounts, including comparisons with the annual budget programme are reported to the Board on a regular basis by the Chairman of the Finance Committee and monthly approval of the appointment/remuneration of staff is also considered by the Board of Directors.

It is the policy of Ability West that all staff and volunteers, including members of the Board, operate subject to best practice recruitment policies and Garda vetting procedures. All staff and volunteers are made aware of their responsibilities to protect those they support through adherence to national policies, e.g. Children First and Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse. The company has a 'no tolerance' approach to any form of abuse and promotes a culture which supports this ethos.





*Launch of New Logo and Website, November 2017  
 I-r: Galway Senior Hurler, John Hanbury, Mahmood Sobhani, Bad Dog, Chief Executive,  
 Breda Crehan-Roche, Chairman, Ray Kelly, Galway Senior Hurler, Jason Flynn.  
 Front: Galway Senior Hurling Team Manager, Micháel Donoghue*

## ABILITY WEST'S OBJECTIVES 2017

### For Children and Family Services;

- To provide a quality and timely service across our children's services, multi-disciplinary assessment, intervention and services, respite, home sharing and contract families, as well as other supports including improvements to waiting lists and innovations

Ability West's children's respite services are inspected by HIQA and comply with HIQA standards and regulation.

Ability West is patron of four Special Schools as follows:

- St. Joseph's Special School, Newcastle, Galway
- St. Oliver's Special School, Tuam, Co. Galway
- St. Teresa's Special School, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Tigh Nan Dooley Scoil Speisialta, An Cheathrú Rua, Co. Na Gallimhe
- Ability West works with the Health Service Executive, Brothers of Charity Services Galway and Enable Ireland in relation to the transition of multi-disciplinary services in line with national

policy, i.e. Progressing Disability Services for Children, with the introduction of Springtime Children's Services

- Comply with HIQA standards and regulations for child residential and respite services

### For Adult Services;

- Comply with HIQA standards and regulations for adult residential and respite services
- Implement the HSE interim standards for New Directions in day services
- Advance opportunities for more personalised services and supports in day and residential settings
- Enable adults with intellectual disability and autism to live as independently as possible in their own communities. Supported individual living options will be provided in so far as is possible
- Provide multi-disciplinary services and supports to adults including improvements to waiting lists and innovation
- Work closely with the Service User Council
- Continually review delivery of services to meet service users' expressed needs and preferences



*Mary Joyce & Chloe Conneely meeting the President at the opening ceremony to Clifden Art's Week September 2017*

- Empower individuals to make choices to enable them to reach their full potential
- Utilise mainstream services, support and options

### **For Families, Friends and Community;**

- Encourage and foster the involvement of families and natural supports
- Consolidate and build on existing partnerships with families and stakeholders
- Nurture the organisation's culture that promotes community participation and active involvement

### **For Staff, Volunteers, Community Employment Scheme and Other Scheme Participants, e.g. TÚS;**

- To have an effective staff allocation, work/life balance and achieve lower than 3% absenteeism rate
- To have a flexible and skilled workforce to meet the needs of service users within available resources
- Ongoing training will be provided to staff, volunteers and Community Employment (CE) Scheme participants and others in relation to best practice, person centred planning and self-direction methodology of service provision

- Mandatory training will be provided to staff, volunteers and CE Scheme participants in compliance with legislation

### **For Ability West's Resources;**

- To manage within the budget allocation
- To comply fully with statutory and legal requirements
- Secure adequate resources
- Ensure the efficient and effective allocation of resources
- Organise ongoing fundraising to contribute to capital projects

### **For Ability West as a Company**

- Continue with external accreditation, I.S. EN ISO 9001:2015, Excellence Through People 1000:2012, QQI for training programmes
- Ensure that Ability West, as Registered Provider, as per HIQA standards and regulation, continue to carry out unannounced visits to residential and respite designated centres
- Implement HSE interim standards New Directions in day services
- Continue auditing all services and supports in line with external accreditation, compliance and regulation
- Ensure active participation of Ability West in the community

## STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES

### Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018 has four strategic priorities

- Services and Supports for the Individual
- Partnership with Families, Friends and Community
- Resource Management
- Communication

Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018 is available on [www.abilitywest.ie](http://www.abilitywest.ie)

### 2017 progress against the strategic plan

Key deliverables

- 100% Person Centred Plans in place
- 46% of family member involvement on the Board of Directors
- 49% of family members involved in the branches
- 176 staff trained in variety of Speech and Language courses: Lámh, Communication, Visual Communication Supports, Communication Passports, Social Stories
- 8 projects supported through the use of capital funds (raised through fundraising)
- Service User Consultation Day held in November 2017
- 230 active volunteers
- 67 individuals availed of home share/contract family/shared living schemes
- 1 *So Can I* Disability Awareness Training programme delivered to a school in Galway.
- 110 individuals actively getting intervention with Feeding, Eating, Drinking, Swallowing per month

Towards the latter end of 2018 we will be commencing work on a new five year strategic plan; 2019-2023.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Solicitors

Kieran Murphy & Co., 9 The Crescent, Galway, H91 W6T7

Advokat Compliance, Merrythought House, Templeshannon, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, Y21 EOF3

### Bank

Bank of Ireland, 22 Mainguard Street, Galway, H91 TX21

### Auditors

FCC Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors, Steamship House, Dock Street, Galway, H91 YF8C

### Registered Office

Blackrock House, Salthill, Galway, H91 R254

Ability West is a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered no. 41317. Ability West is registered with the Revenue Commissioners as a Charity under Registration No. CHY6306 and is also approved for the Scheme of Tax Relief for Donations to Eligible Charities and other Approved Bodies under Section 848A Taxes Consolidation 1997 under Tax No. 22372226Q.

Éirim an Iarthair is a registered Business Name under the Registration of Business Names Act, 1963, Registered No. 335139.

### Ability West:

- Is a registered charity under the Charities Regulatory Authority, registration no. 20011161.
- Quality Management System is ISO 9001:2015 accredited, National Standards Authority of Ireland.
- Excellence Through People, 1000: 2012, National Standards Authority of Ireland
- Has signed up to the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations Fundraising from the Public (Charities Regulator) and the Voluntary Code of Governance for Community, Voluntary and Charity Organisations in Ireland.
- Is an equal opportunities employer.

This annual report was project managed by Ms. Carol A. Browne, Executive Assistant.



Service Users from Tuam Day Services Visit Leinster House

## TUAM DAY SERVICES VISIT LEINSTER HOUSE

*By Sam Gleeson, Instructor/Supervisor, Team Resource Centre*

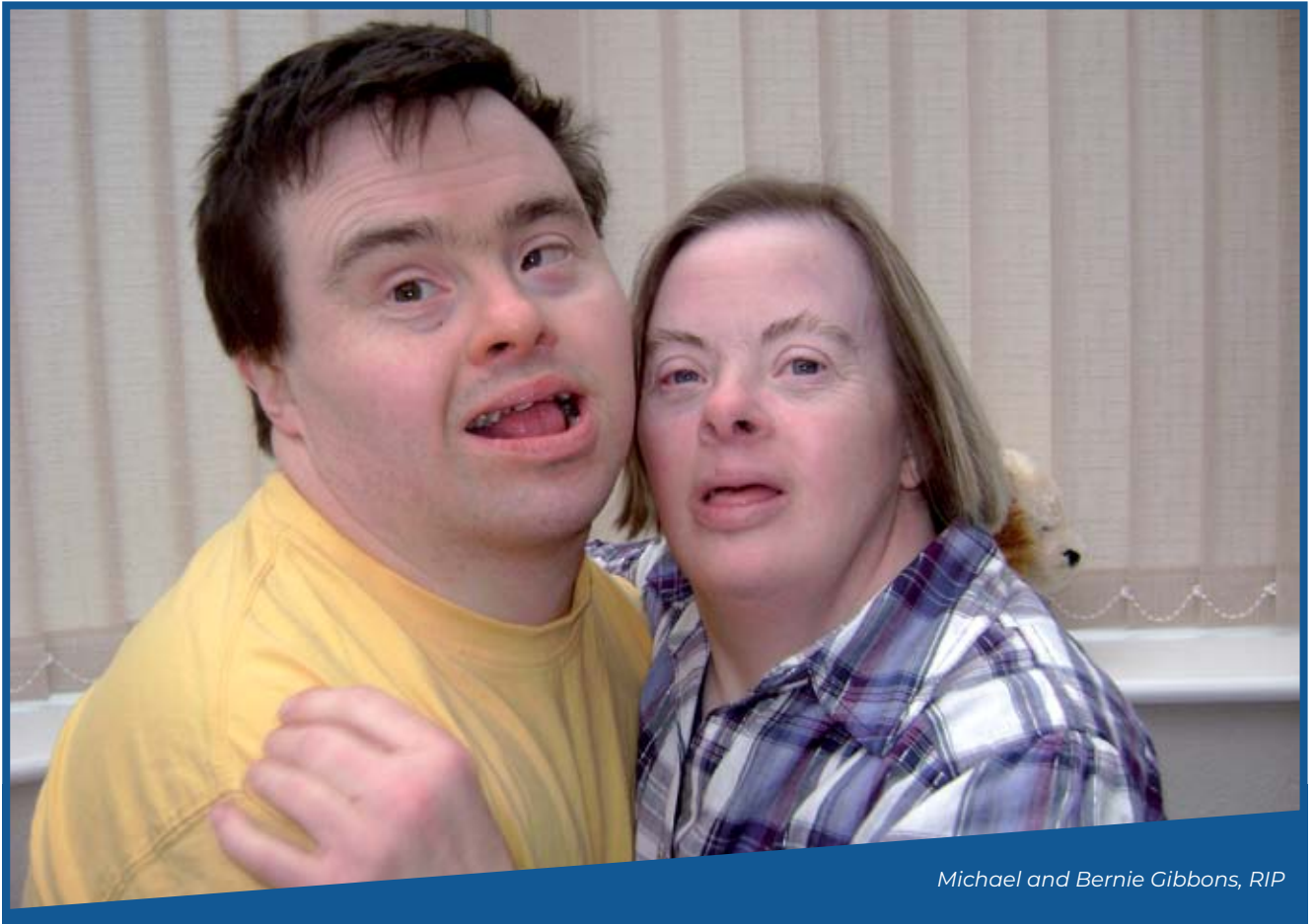
In January 2017, Minister of State at the Office of Public Works, Sean Canney, TD, visited Team Resource Centre in Tuam. During his visit Minister Canney invited service users and staff to visit the Dáil on 21 February 2017. A bus was organised to bring service users from Team Resource Centre, Milaoise Adult Day Service (ADS) and The Glebe Resource Centre to Dublin. We arrived at Leinster House and were greeted by Paul who was our Tour Guide for the morning.

Firstly, we were shown to the Dáil chambers where we sat in the gallery and Paul explained the workings of a Dáil sitting. We were then brought through the corridors of Leinster House and we heard about the history of its build and renovation. We were shown the portraits of all the previous Taoisigh. Paul then brought us to sit in the Seanad where he explained how the senators vote and discuss legislation. Our final stop

on the tour was at the front hallway where we were shown a copy of the Irish Proclamation. Paul explained the difficulties encountered in printing the proclamation as the British Government had tried to stop all printed press getting to the people.

After our tour, we met with Minister Canney and his wife, Geraldine, in the Dáil Bar where they had organised light refreshments. Minister Canney had arranged for the Minister for Health, Simon Harris, and Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, Finian McGrath, to meet us. They kindly took time out of their busy schedules to meet us and allowed us to have photos taken with them. While we were there we also got to meet Joan Burton TD.

We thoroughly enjoyed our day meeting the Ministers and touring Leinster House. Thanks to Minister Canney for organising this special tour.



*Michael and Bernie Gibbons, RIP*

## **A TRIBUTE TO SIBLINGS, BERNIE AND MICHAEL GIBBONS**

*By Anne Fitzpatrick, Manager, Blackrock House Adult Day Service (ADS)*

Rarely would a sister and brother spend so much of their adult lives together, however, Bernie and Michael Gibbons both attended Blackrock ADS, Bernie being the older sister and the 'boss' whilst Michael was always quite subdued and placid. Both radiated with their unique fabulous personalities. Like all siblings, they occasionally had their differences of opinion but their love for each other was insurmountable. They were such a part of their other siblings, Margaret and Mary's, lives who called into the ADS so very often to bring them to the local hotel for lunch.

In May last year, Bernie joined her parents and sister in heaven and it was incredible that Michael then followed Bernie, undoubtedly to heaven within 48 hours. All who know the Gibbons family are aware of their wonderful spirituality, strong faith and belief in being reunited in Eternal Life.

May they both rest in peace with their parents and sister, Dr. Ann Gibbons, who was a former Board Member of Ability West. The fun, laughter and love of Bernie and Michael will be forever within the hearts of all of us who were so very privileged to work with them.

# A TRIBUTE TO FIONA

*By Patricia McNamara, Sister*

Fiona brought joy and happiness to our lives for 35 wonderful years. She lived her life to the fullest. Fiona had a fantastic sense of humour and her infectious laughter and impish smile filled our hearts. She was the centre of our lives and her bubbly, vivacious personality drew everyone to her. Fiona was inquisitive and never tired of meeting people, enquiring about which type of shampoo they used or admiring their fashion sense.

Fiona loved going out for a walk or cycling her bicycle and chatting to everyone she met along the way. She also loved swimming and horse riding. Her day was packed with activities and she loved attending her day centre, St Teresa's as a child and more latterly Blackrock House ADS. Fiona loved variety in her day and was always happy to try new activities. A more recent addition to her weekly routine was Zumba one evening a week in Tí Geal which she looked forward to with great excitement. She equally relished her cinema outings and was rather taken with the One Direction movie. She also loved her evening discos in Dunamace and as far as Fiona was concerned, the music could never be loud enough. Daniel O'Donnell was amongst her favourite singers and his music was always playing in our car, at home and in Tí Geal. His CDs had to be played during her hospital admission also and one of the ICU nurses was even kind enough to join in the singing on occasion.

Fiona enjoyed attending concert recitals in NUI Galway with Blackrock House ADS and was particularly entranced by the cello. When she was a teenager, Fiona enjoyed playing my cello and loved playing the family piano though no one



*Fiona McNamara, RIP*

else was allowed to touch the keys whilst Fiona was playing. On one occasion, after the piano had been tuned, the piano tuner played quite a few songs and Fiona recognised all of them and happily sang along.

Fiona moved to Galway when she was 18 and we told her that she was off to "third level" now. Fiona loved being at home but she found a second family in Galway in Dunamace, Tí Geal and Blackrock House ADS. She loved to come home at weekends but when she returned to Tí Geal would announce that she was home also and already knew which staff were working before she even got out of the car as she recognised their cars and knew the rota as well as they did.

Throughout her life, Fiona was adept at reading people and interpreting body language and knew what we were thinking almost before we did ourselves.

She was full of mischief and plans. She loved to smile and laugh and there was never a dull moment when Fiona was around. Her heart was pure and open. She laughed and had a wonderful sense of humour and loved to tease and joke with everyone.

Fiona loved animals and loved horse riding when she was younger; she rode the tallest horse in the stables. She adored dogs, especially Jake, and was always trying to entice him into the kitchen at home. In Blackrock House, she loved going to visit dogs of kind staff members who volunteered their pets.

Fiona adored family holidays in Kerry visiting our grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. On the way, she was always impatient to get there and would encourage our father to drive faster and hated any car to pass her out. She had a wonderful holiday in Portugal as a teenager. She found it hilarious on our first night there that we were all up late and sitting outside eating chips in a small restaurant near the resort. During that

holiday, she loved going on safari trips, eating out and going to the beach but was happy to return home at the end of the holiday and started singing "Four Roads to Glenamaddy" when she was informed of our impending return.

Fiona loved unconditionally. She made the world a better place and taught people to love no matter what, to see past her disability and to recognise the wonders of her abilities.

On behalf of my parents and myself, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the staff, volunteers and service users of Ability West who cared for Fiona, interacted with her and took her into their hearts.

To paraphrase W.H. Auden, Fiona was our north, our south, our east and our west. She was our greatest gift. We miss her every single second and it broke our hearts to have to let her go, but we will treasure forever the wonderful memories we have of a life truly and purely lived. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of all who knew her.

## **FIONA MCNAMARA: 23-12-1981 – 31-01-2017**

*By Annalore Herbert, Unit Director, and the Staff of Tí Geal Group Home*

It was our great privilege to be a part of Fiona's life in Ability West. While some staff were acquainted with Fiona for many years, other members of our staff team could not claim the years but certainly got to know this wonderful person.

What can I say to draw a picture for those of you who were unfamiliar; could that be true?

Fiona was the life and soul of all situations to which she was a part. Her personality was witty, bubbly and fun was the dominant feature. Laughter was a major part of her day and she would actively seek out situations which were 'fun'. Her

love of people, their reactions to everyday events, was Fiona's delight.

When out and about in the community everyone got a heartfelt 'hello' and a mandatory 'hello' was expected in reply.

Fiona's impact on the lives of those who knew her will endure in a very positive manner. Not a day passes when we do not think and speak about her with a smile. Fiona was one of life's great teachers, a reminder to enjoy, laugh and take delight in the simple, precious time we have in the company of others.

We are grateful to have been a part of her time in Ability West. May she rest in peace.



*Martial Arts Trainees from Tuam and Ballyglunin*

## TRAINING IN MARTIAL ARTS

*By Mary Margaret Garvey, St. Joseph's, Training Services, Cedar Court, Tuam*

Service users from St. Joseph's Training Services and The Hub, Tuam, and Brooklodge ADS, Ballyglunin, attend weekly training sessions at the Southern Mantis Martial Arts Academy in Tuam. They commenced training in 2015 and since then have gone from strength to strength. In December 2017 the students put on a very successful end of year exhibition for the public. The academy is run by Head Instructor, Gary Cassidy who has trained in the martial arts and chi gung cultivation for over 30 years.

Over the past two years, the students have achieved a high level of skill in this system of martial arts. Gary stresses that "The particular form and training drills that they have learnt, along with passing merit badge tests are exactly the same as those that are taught in mainstream classes".

Various martial art forms and techniques are taught, e.g. kung fu forms (co-ordination and balance); weapons (eye-hand co-ordination and footwork); Self-defence (two person training drills self-defence techniques); chi gung cultivation (series of deep breathing exercises for health and wellbeing, combines body, breathing and movement, posture and balance) and boxing mitt routine (focus mitt drill that develops reflex, punching techniques, footwork and fitness). Focus, concentration, balance, tone, awareness, self-regulation, core strength, reduced anxiety, and awareness are just a few of the benefits students receive when training in the academy.

The students are now aiming towards an official white sash grading in 2018. Well done to everyone.





*Birthday Celebration  
l-r: Patricia, Pauline, Margaret and Martin*

## ACHIEVING ONE OF MY PERSON CENTRED PLAN GOALS

*By Margaret Joyce, Service User*

In October 2017 I achieved one of my Person Centred Plan goals when I travelled to Bristol for the weekend to visit my sister, Pauline, and her husband. My sister, Patricia, flew with me from Knock Airport and my brother, Martin, made a

surprise visit over the weekend. I had a great time as we celebrated my upcoming birthday and some of my nieces visited for the occasion. I got to see my sister's house for the first time and really enjoyed relaxing with my family.

## A TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN GLYNN

Kathleen will always be fondly remembered as someone who brought a smile to everyone she met. With her friendly, warm and fun-loving personality, she was very popular with all her friends and staff in Active Ageing, and her wider circle of friends. Kathleen is missed by her family, friends and all who knew her. May her gentle soul rest in peace.



*Kathleen Glynn, RIP*



*Lumos Delegates with Chief Executive, Breda Crehan-Roche (middle), and Brian McDonald, Positive Behaviour Support Manager (third from right)*

## LUMOS COLLABORATION WITH ABILITY WEST

*By Brian Mc Donald, Positive Behaviour Support Manager*

In November 2016 UNESCO/NUIG approached Ability West requesting support for Lumos ([www.wearelumos.org](http://www.wearelumos.org)) with funding from Atlantic Philanthropies. Lumos was founded by Harry Potter author, J.K. Rowling, to advance the global deinstitutionalisation of children and they were specifically seeking guidance with regard to behaviours that challenge.

Brian Mc Donald, Positive Behaviour Support Manager, travelled to Bulgaria for one week in March 2017 to visit services, meet with representatives (from Georgia, Moldova, Czech Republic, Bulgaria) to discuss strategy and to deliver training with regard to behaviours that challenge.

Subsequently, in November 2017, Lumos requested that Ability West facilitate a study visit. On 19 and 20 December, seven delegates from Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Moldova were hosted. Lumos were very appreciative of this study visit and stated: "The study visit was appreciated by all the participants, but especially

the Bulgarian delegation, for whom the chance to see the practices of Ability West was very timely, as they are preparing some guidelines for people working with children with special needs. They were enthused by the work of Ability West, and this will influence the work across Bulgaria. The delegations from Czech Republic and Moldova were also excited about the services they viewed, and will share these with their teams; the topic of Home Sharing was particularly inspirational."

This collaboration highlighted the quality of the work that is done by Ability West even in these straightened times. Sincere appreciation to our Chief Executive, Breda Crehan-Roche, for supporting the collaboration and equally so to those that engaged with the delegates who were amazed at the positive, person-centred and respectful way that all our staff spoke about service users that can present with complex care issues.



*Blackrock House ADS Nativity  
(Mary) Breda Gill and (Joseph) Padraig Kelly*

## **BLACKROCK HOUSE ADULT DAY SERVICE (ADS) NATIVITY**

*By Joanie O'Sullivan, Senior Instructor, Blackrock House ADS*

It was all go in Blackrock House ADS in the run up to Christmas as we had decided to put on a nativity and were determined to have fun in the process. There was a lot to do between writing a script, gathering costumes, assigning roles, set design, carol practicing and dress rehearsals, and not least to transform one of our activity rooms into a stable in Bethlehem. However, even though it was a busy time we all thoroughly enjoyed the preparations and the excitement. We ensured that each of the service users had a part to play and we creatively wrote the script around each individual's talents.

The day finally arrived, it was all hands on deck as we helped everyone

into their costumes and made final adjustments to the set. The audience arrived and the first carol began. The story was a narrative of a very special journey by Mary Breda and Joseph Padraig as they made their way through Galway and along the prom. As the story goes, they were refused entry to various establishments along the way but eventually found refuge in a stable in Blackrock! The play went off beautifully and there were many moving moments. Seeing the delight and pride in the eyes of the many family members who travelled to support their loved ones will be a memory we will always cherish.



*Occupational Therapists  
Simone Mitton and Barry Foley*

## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN ABILITY WEST**

*By Simone Mitton, Senior Occupational Therapist*

Occupational Therapy (OT) helps people to do the everyday things that they want to do. We enable people to better participate in activities they enjoy and need to do, by adapting the activity or the environment. We also help people develop skills so they can better engage in daily activities and tasks.

Barry Foley, Occupational Therapist, and I work in the OT Department, managed by Renjith Joseph, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Manager.

Since we commenced with Ability West, Barry and I have been working to see

as many service users as possible in a fair and equitable way. We continue to establish ways of working to ensure efficiency and accountability, with emphasis on thorough assessment of need, effective intervention, training and education with support for reviews as needed. Our passion is helping people have meaning in their lives, helping them engage in things that maintain their health and wellbeing and minimising barriers to people achieving their goals and ambitions. We hope to continue to develop the department in achieving this objective.



*John Farragher, Chairperson, Service User Council, speaking at the Best Buddies Ball 2017*

## SERVICE USER COUNCIL UPDATE

*By John Farragher, Chairperson, and Alan O'Connor, Facilitator, Service User Council*

The Service User Council was set up in 2010 to advocate for service users of Ability West and we have enjoyed another successful year. Over the course of the year we were asked to contribute to a number of areas, such as the National Platform of Self-Advocates Conference entitled 'Managing a Good Life'. We were also consulted by the National Quality Improvement Office Disability Services-Social Care Division about Person Centred Planning and Communication with service users. John Farragher attended one of four regional workshops organised by the HSE and the Irish Platform for Patient Organisations,

Science and Industry to discuss what a person centred co-ordinated care system would look like.

On the home front, in September the Chief Executive asked us to consider the proposed new logo and colours of Ability West and we also contributed ideas on the possible revision of the Vision and Mission statements. In November we held a very successful consultation day with 120 service users in attendance.

So far in 2018, the council is busy working on the new Advocacy Champion Project and the Service User Forum.

# QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATE

By Eileen Costello-Conneely, Quality & Compliance Manager



HIQA Registration Certificate for Ara na Gréine Group Home – 5 May 2017. Kevin Purcell, Unit Director/Person in Charge with John McHugo, A/Chief Executive

The quality of services and supports is monitored and reviewed on a continual basis in Ability West, this ensures that we have oversight in terms of trends and areas for improvement, working on these continuously throughout services. The organisation complies with a wide range of legislation, regulations and standards in areas of corporate governance, management, services and supports, some of these areas include company legislation, charity legislation, codes of practice, compliance with Statutory Instrument 367 and Standards for Residential and Respite Services, the HSE Interim Standards for Day Services, and national policies and procedures such as Children First and Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse.

Ability West has a Quality Management System in place, which encompasses all services and supports, providing a framework for overall quality management. This is externally accredited by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) to the international standards ISO 9001:2015.

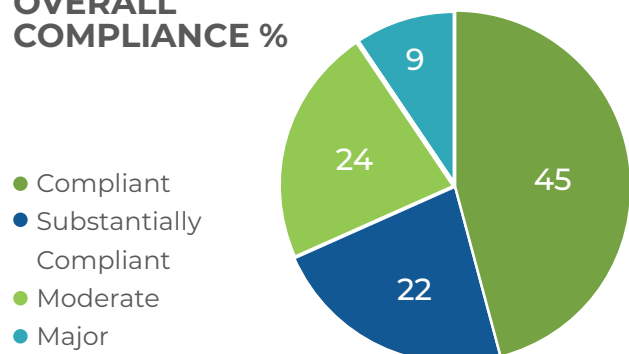
During 2017 we were successful in maintaining certification to the standard 'Excellence Through People 1000:2012', which is externally accredited by NSAI. This accreditation includes human resources processes including staff communication.

The Quality Management System is used to identify areas of good practice, areas that need improvement and progress on these, taking an overall risk management approach. This is done in many ways, including carrying out audits, and analysis of results of such audits, inspections, feedback, complaints, accident/incident records, statutory notification records.

## HIQA AND RESIDENTIAL AND RESPITE SERVICES

Ability West complies with the HIQA Standards for Residential and Respite Services standards, along with the applicable legislation, i.e. Statutory Instrument 367. All current residential and respite services have successfully gone through the registration process and have received registration certificates as Designated Centres. There is a three year renewal of registration timeframe, and this process commenced in the latter end of 2017. HIQA undertook a total of 22 inspections during 2017 and we have increased our compliance levels (fully compliant and substantially compliant) from 59% in 2016 to 67% in 2017.

### OVERALL COMPLIANCE %

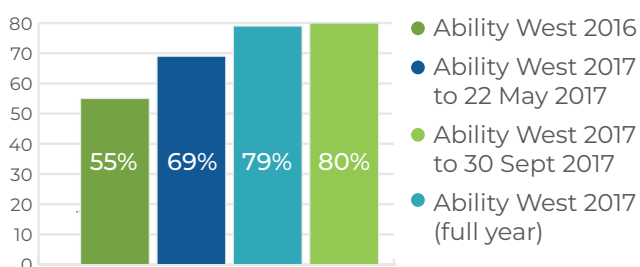


There was a significant increase in compliance levels for 'Safe and Suitable Premises' from 50% in 2016 to 84% in 2017. This was welcome given the investment in capital projects in recent years.

In relation to 'Social Care Needs' our level of compliance continues to increase, i.e. from 55% in 2016 to 80% in 2017, detailed hereunder:

### COMPARISON OF OUTCOME 5 - SOCIAL CARE NEEDS, 2016-2017

COMPLIANT AND SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIANT RESULTS



Overall results in terms of strengths and areas for improvement have been compared to our Provider Led Audit results and shared through the line management structure in terms of overall learning and identification and management of risk.

### ABILITY WEST PROVIDER LED AUDIT PROGRAMME

A key process in terms of monitoring services is the organisation's Provider Led Audit Programme. During 2017, a minimum of two audits were undertaken in all residential and respite services in compliance with HIQA Standards and Regulations. The results of the provider led audits have been reviewed with strengths and areas for improvement identified. In addition, results have been compared with the HIQA inspection results, which indicate similarities between the provider led

audits and the HIQA inspections, e.g. 83% compliance levels in 'Social Care Needs' for Quarters 3 and 4 in provider led audits, and 80% in HIQA inspections for 2017.

### HSE INTERIM STANDARDS AND DAY SERVICES

We continue to work with day services in relation to the implementation of the HSE Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities. Ability West takes account of these standards and our own policies and procedures when undertaking audits in day services.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

The number of incidents recorded in total for 2017 was 3,490, which was a decrease of 237 on 2016. This is the first time in five years where there has been a drop in the number of incidents recorded.

Behaviours that challenge continue to represent the highest number of incidents during the year; on comparison with 2016 this shows a decrease of 257. Medication incidents are the second highest followed by "Other" in third place and Slips/Trips/Falls in fourth place.

In analysing incident statistics a number of areas were identified that need to be addressed to ensure greater accuracy of coding incidents to comprehensively integrate with overall risk management.

### RISK MANAGEMENT

Comprehensive analysis of accident/incidents takes place across all levels of the organisation. The Chief Executive, Senior Management Team and Assistant Directors of Client Services are provided with analysis of incidents on a monthly basis together

Incident Type	Major	Minor	Moderate	Negligible	Grand Total
Behaviour	129	628	237	1018	<b>2012</b>
Incident	98	379	300	422	<b>1200</b>
Near Miss	4	32	196	47	<b>279</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>1039</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>1487</b>	<b>3490</b>

with an in depth analysis on a quarterly and annual basis. Statistical analysis is also provided to the Quality and Safety Executive Committee and to Quality and Safety Board Committee. As part of their risk management processes, Managers/ Unit Directors are required to analyse and review centre statistics to inform their risk registers. Risk Registers are reviewed by Managers/Unit Directors at specified periods throughout the year as determined by the various risk assessments.

The Board of Directors also review the Corporate Risk Register and have biannual Quality and Safety Board Committee meetings and biannual meetings with the Senior Management Team and Quality and Compliance Manager.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Officer manages all FOI requirements. This includes providing advisory support and guidance to decision-makers on FOI requests. The decision-makers are the Directors and Assistant Directors of Client Services, Human Resources and the Director of Finance. These were formally appointed by the Chief Executive via a Delegation Order in accordance with the FOI 2014 Act. The FOI Publication Scheme has been updated and published on Ability West's website. Quarterly and annual statistics required on the website are published accordingly.

## DATA PROTECTION AND THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into effect on 25 May, 2018, and considerable work has been completed, overseen by the Data Protection Officer and a project team which was set up to prepare the organisation for this compliance. The project team consists of the Data Protection Officer and a number of Data Champions from several Heads of

Departments and key staff members. One of the mandatory requirements under GDPR when it comes into effect is that data processing logs (mapping out data processing activities) will have to be in place and these are being worked on within departments currently. The project team assists in this work along with other areas in terms of overall compliance, such as information sharing, training and awareness, development of statements of information practices, gap analysis, data processing agreements, privacy impact assessments, guidance on policies and procedures with regard to GDPR.

## 2017 STATISTICS

2017	FOI	Data Protection	Time spent
Number of requests	7	2	25 days (approx.)
Number of internal reviews	1	n/a	1 day
Number of breaches	n/a	10	2.2 days

## FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

Feedback recorded amounted to 28 in total for 2017, the majority of these were in residential and respite services, with feedback ranging from compliments on the overall quality of service and supports provided to family members, to satisfaction with facilities overall.

A total of 133 complaints were logged in 2017, and at the end of January 2018, 118 of these were resolved. A good deal of the complaints were in relation to accessing more services, such as respite, and a number of others were in relation to communication and sharing of information. Some complaints were made by staff advocating for service users, for example, in relation to behaviours that challenge and impact on other service users.





*Ray Kelly, Chairman, with Jenny Keaveney and Elizabeth Reilly who won Best Overall Match – Best Buddies 2017*

## VOLUNTEER UPDATE

*By Linda Keane, Volunteer Programme Manager*

Ability West’s Volunteer Programme has over 230 volunteers who make a difference to the lives of people with an intellectual disability. The role of the volunteer varies; some volunteers choose to be an extra pair of hands in a centre while others take on the rewarding role of befriending. Volunteers are encouraged to share what they enjoy doing with others. If your talent is art, maybe you would like to assist with an art programme. Volunteering is a very flexible way of engaging with the services of Ability West and learning more about intellectual disability and autism. If a person wishes to volunteer, they are required to go through the screening process, i.e. complete a Volunteer Application and undergo Garda Vetting. Training is provided and we seek a minimum commitment of six months.

There are also group activities which currently include: A Touch of Ability Craft &

Social Evening in Tuam, the C airdeas Disco in Turloughmore Community Centre and the Art Group in Loughrea.

### MAKING A FRIEND

Where would we be in life without our friends? People with an intellectual disability are no different from anyone else. They want to have friendships and go out with their friends to do the ordinary everyday activities that so many take for granted. If you join our Befriending Programme, you will be matched with a peer who has similar interests.

The Best Buddies College Programme continues to grow in popularity in NUIG and GMIT. Young people learn more about themselves, develop an understanding of intellectual disability and have an opportunity to truly embrace diversity and equality. The Best Buddies Ball is one of the social highlights of the year.



*Moycullen Music Event, September 2017  
Fundraiser organised by the Moycullen Branch*

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING UPDATE 2017

*By Isabella De Luca, Communication and Development Officer*

2017 was a busy year for community development and fundraising and at the outset, I would like to thank the many volunteers who gave untold hours of their time to organise and support events in aid of Ability West. The generosity and commitment of our board members, branch members, staff, volunteers and supporters is very much appreciated by us.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Moycullen Branch

In 2017 a new branch of Ability West was set up in Moycullen. The members have done tremendous work in raising funds and awareness for their local centre, Meitheal. Over €6,000 has been raised through individual donations and community events including a night of live music in The Forge in September and Della's Tea Dance in November. These funds will be utilised for capital improvements to the centre including a new kitchen and an outdoor recreational

area. Our sincere thanks to all branch members and to all our supporters in the community, including Moycullen Active Retirement Association and the Moycullen Men and Women's Sheds.

## FUNDRAISING

Your support is vital for us to continue providing high quality services and supports to children and adults with an intellectual disability in Galway who avail of our services. Below is a brief outline of just a few wonderful events held during 2017:

### Ability West's Fashion Show

Ability West's Fashion Show celebrated its fifth year in style in March 2017 in the Clayton Hotel, Galway. It is safe to say that with an audience of nearly 500, over 70 models, 26 performers and over €8,000 raised, the catwalk was practically blown away by glitz, glamour and all-round entertainment. Solo and group performances on the night ranged from tin whistle playing to singing, and from



*Bosco McDermott, committee member, speaking at the presentation of prizes at the annual golf fundraiser in Galway Golf Club, September 2017*

stand-up comedy to dancing. We would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all of the models and performers who made Ability West so proud on the night. Our sincere thanks also to the businesses and those in the wider community who so generously provided spot prizes for our raffle, the venue, outfits for the models, slide sponsorship, staging and donations. Events such as this one would not be possible without your ongoing support.

### **Beechwood Adult Day Service Fundraisers**

In 2017 staff and service users at Beechwood Adult Day Service (ADS) got involved in fundraising for the centre and the impact of same is significant. Planned purchases include IT and sensory equipment. Ability West would like to acknowledge Caherlistrane native Seán Keane, who chose Beechwood ADS as one of the three beneficiaries for his series of “Home is Where the Heart is” Summer Concerts in the Salthill Hotel, which raised over €3,000 for each charity. Seán’s generosity and commitment to the Galway community and especially Ability West is greatly appreciated.

Our thanks also to everyone involved in the Beechwood Trad Concert which took place in September in Galway City. A huge amount of work was put into making it a success and over €6,000 was raised for the centre. Thanks to the committee, performers, sponsors, and everyone who attended on the night.

### **Golf Fundraiser 2017**

The 11th Annual Ability West Golf Fundraiser took place in September in Galway Golf Club. It was our most successful year yet with over €16,000 being raised in aid of a new minibus for residents of Clochatuisce Group Home in Salthill. Special thanks, as always, to the outstanding committee who have shown tremendous commitment to supporting people with intellectual disability and our organisation year after year. Sincere thanks to the main sponsors of the event, Martin Hession and New Ireland Assurance.

As you will appreciate, there were many more events, large and small, held during the year and, on behalf of Ability West, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who organised, participated in and supported any of the events held in aid of Ability West.



*Committee Members of the Connacht Clan who organised a table quiz in aid of Ability West, March 2017*

## Compliance

Due to changes in compliance and best practice to comply with the Charities Act 2009, Ability West has developed a range of new policies and procedures for fundraising in order to ensure that all unrestricted fundraised/donated monies are utilised for our capital programme. This programme includes: new builds, extension/refurbishment of existing buildings, the purchase of specialised equipment and buses/minibuses. Without the continued investment in existing services, or the development of new services to meet current and future needs, it would be difficult to continue achieving the objectives of the organisation. Ability West has developed associated procedures and a code of practice which outline the processes for fundraising.

All new policies and the new Fundraising Event Proposal Form are available on [www.abilitywest.ie/fundraising](http://www.abilitywest.ie/fundraising).

## CORPORATE SUPPORT

### Blackrock House Adult Day Service and Aviva

By Anne Fitzpatrick, Manager, Blackrock House ADS

We are indebted to the 15 staff members from Aviva who very willingly volunteered on a few Saturdays to do internal painting in Blackrock ADS contributing in creating a bright accessible environment. Special acknowledgement also to a number of staff members from the ADS who also volunteered on the Saturdays, in particular to Laura McGrath, staff member, who initiated the development of a close connection with Aviva.

The National Council of the Blind (NCBI) provided practical support and information on effective colour contrast within the building. Supporting service users in maintaining independence, adapting to visual deterioration for some service users along with supporting their mobility are all crucial ingredients in promoting positive and meaningful quality of life.

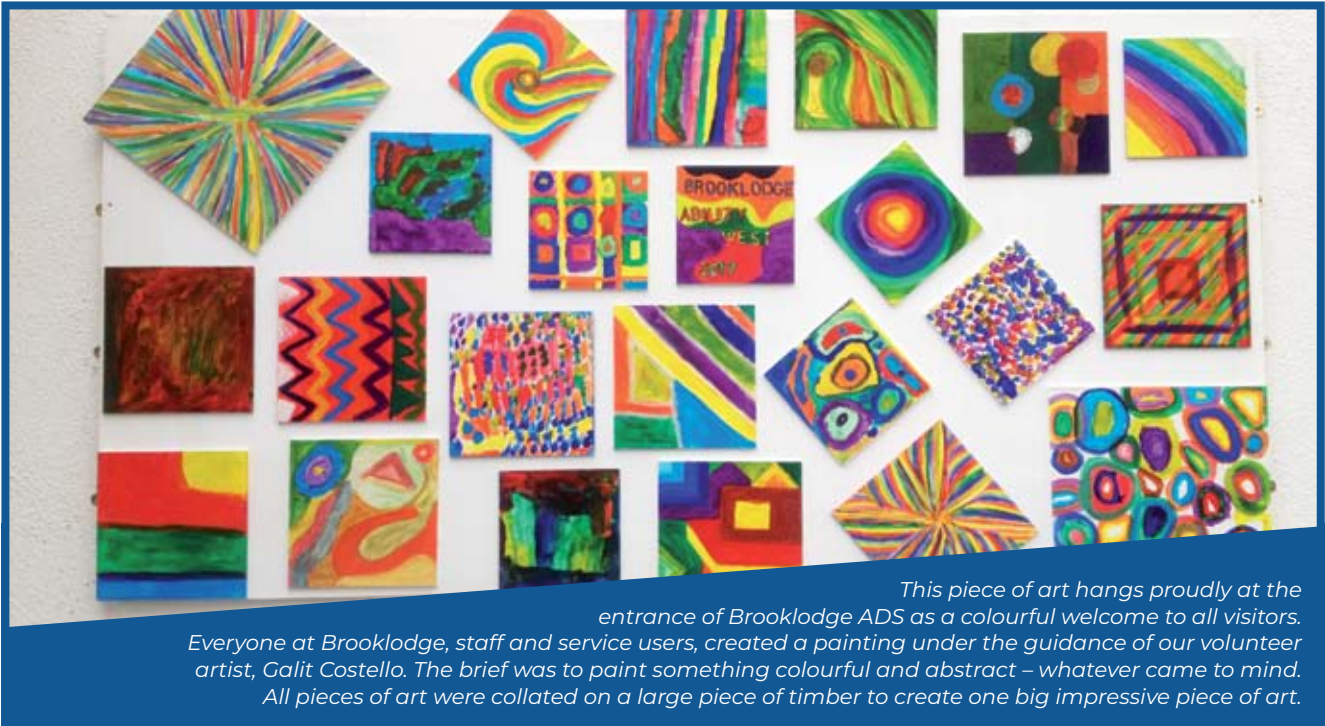
All our news and upcoming events are shared on [www.facebook.com/abilitywest](http://www.facebook.com/abilitywest), [www.twitter.com/abilitywest](http://www.twitter.com/abilitywest) or online at [www.abilitywest.ie](http://www.abilitywest.ie).



*Michael Lohan, Mountbellew Day Service, trying out the new tricycle following a very successful fundraising Bingo Night in Menlough Community Centre in October to raise much needed funds for the purchase of the tricycle for the day service. We would like to sincerely thank all organisers, volunteers and sponsors who gave so generously, both time and contributions. There was a great turn out on the night, so a huge thank you to all who attended.*

## SUMMARY OF FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

	2017 €	2016 €
<b>Branch Fundraising</b>		
Ballinasloe	2,414	82
Galway City	11,690	7,947
Glenamaddy	9,400	-
Headford/Caherlistrane	1,618	5,832
Killascobe	2,380	-
Killimor	4,510	5,000
Loughrea	1,011	2,122
Tuam	1,476	5,836
<b>Total Branch Fundraising</b>	<b>34,499</b>	<b>26,819</b>
Other Fundraising and Donations	61,560	131,456
<b>Total Fundraising and Donations</b>	<b>96,059</b>	<b>158,275</b>



*This piece of art hangs proudly at the entrance of Brooklodge ADS as a colourful welcome to all visitors. Everyone at Brooklodge, staff and service users, created a painting under the guidance of our volunteer artist, Galit Costello. The brief was to paint something colourful and abstract – whatever came to mind. All pieces of art were collated on a large piece of timber to create one big impressive piece of art.*

# AUDITED ACCOUNTS

The Company’s Auditors, FCC Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, reported, without qualification, that the 2017 financial statements gave a true and fair view of the company’s affairs and of its results for the year and were properly prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice and the Companies Act 2014.

The audited accounts were approved at a meeting of the Board of Directors held on 16 April 2018 and were signed on behalf of the Board of Directors by Mr. Patrick Lawless and Mr. Michael Finnerty.

A full copy of the audited accounts 2017 is available on [www.abilitywest.ie](http://www.abilitywest.ie).

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ability West would like to take this opportunity to thank the various individuals and organisations whose co-operation and assistance have been invaluable to the organisation. We would particularly like to thank parents, family members, guardians and service users for their support and assistance.

**Thanks to:**

The Health Service Executive, HSE Staff and the Health Service Executive Corporate Employee Relations Services; Department of Education and Skills, Department of Social Protection, and

Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board.

Staff Members in all our services

Board Members, Branch Members, Volunteers, Community Employment and other scheme participants.

Statutory, Non-Statutory and Voluntary Service Providers

In addition, we are deeply grateful to local community groups, businesses and individuals, too many to name individually, from across the city and county for their assistance and support in 2017.



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